

# WOOD BUFFALO National Park

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Nov. 1983

PARCS CANADA IS PLANNING  
FOR THE FUTURE OF WOOD BUFFALO NATIONAL  
PARK AND WE NEED YOUR HELP.

PARCS CANADA SOLICITE VOTRE COLLABORATION  
AUX PLANS D'AVENIR QU'IL EST EN  
TRAIN D'ELABORER POUR LE PARC NATIONAL  
WOOD BUFFALO.

No. 8

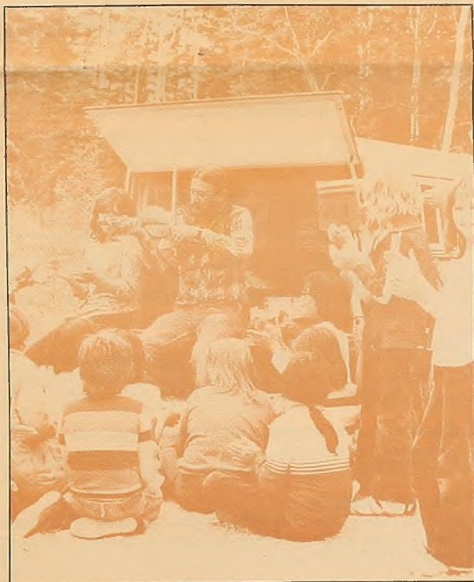
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BUFFALO NATIONAL PARK.



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## Public Participation



## A Summary of Public Comment on the DRAFT MANAGEMENT PLAN

This is the final newsletter related to the preparation of a long range Management Plan for Wood Buffalo National Park.

The Planning Program will be concluded with distribution of the "Management Plan Summary" containing plan decisions. Copies of the principal Management Plan document will be available upon request from the following addresses:

Superintendent  
Wood Buffalo National Park  
P.O. Box 750  
Fort Smith, N.W.T.  
XOE 0P0

Director  
Prairie Region Parks Canada  
400-391 York Avenue,  
Winnipeg, Manitoba  
R3C 4B7

Cet bulletin de nouvelles est aussi disponible en français.

# BACKGROUND ON THE WBNP MANAGEMENT PLANNING PROCESS

The steps followed in this planning program are reviewed for your information.

1. Newsletter #1 (Dec., 1980) and Newsletters 2 and 3 (Jan., 1981) introduced:
  - (a) The planning purpose and process,
  - (b) The Planning Team and Local Liaison Officers,
  - (c) Park Purpose Statement,
  - (d) Planning Issues, and
  - (e) How you, the public, could participate.
2. The first round of public meetings, held during the period of January-March, 1981, brought forth 800 people at 23 public meetings and drop-in sessions in communities in the N.W.T., and northern and southern Alberta.
3. Public comment from meetings, letters and briefs was summarized in Newsletter #4, "A Summary of Your Suggestions," (August 1981).
4. The "Alternative Plan Proposals" were distributed in Newsletter #5, dated November, 1981.
5. The second round of public meetings occurred in the late fall/early winter of 1981 and culminated in Newsletter #6, "A Summary of Your Comments on the Alternative Plan Proposals," dated June, 1982.
6. The Draft Management Plan was then developed and presented to you in the form of Newsletter #7 in September, 1982.
7. A third round of public meetings took place in September/October, 1982. This time 354 people attended 29 meetings and drop-ins, and 25 letters and 5 briefs were received.
8. The Management Plan is now being finalized for presentation to the Minister of Environment for his approval.

## THE PLANNING PROCESS

<b>STAGE #1:</b>	Preparing Park Purpose and Objective Statements Identifying Issues and Collecting Information <b>PUBLIC REVIEW AND COMMENT</b>	Winter 1981
<b>STAGE #2:</b>	Preparing Alternative Plans to Solve Problems <b>PUBLIC REVIEW AND COMMENT</b>	Fall/early Winter 1981/82
<b>STAGE #3:</b>	Selecting a Final Park Plan <b>PUBLIC REVIEW AND COMMENT</b>	Fall 1982 1981/82
<b>STAGE #4:</b>	<b>FINAL APPROVAL (THIS IS WHERE WE ARE NOW)</b>	Summer/ Fall 1983

The Management Plan will guide the development and operation of Wood Buffalo National Park during the next 15 years. Implementation of decisions will be phased over the lifespan of the plan and will depend on the financial resources assigned to Parks Canada. The Management Plan will be formally reviewed at 5-year intervals at which time revisions will be made to the plan if warranted.

## LOCAL LIAISON OFFICERS' COMMITTEE

The Local Liaison Officers, representing communities and organizations in and adjacent to the park, played a key role in the development of this Management Plan. They had to ensure that residents from their respective communities understood the various proposals and issues, and that local comments were adequately considered by the planning team. In addition they provided direction to the Planning Team throughout this exercise.

It is recognized that the Local Liaison Officer function has not always been easy. Therefore, Parks Canada is extending its appreciation to the people who acted in this capacity during the past two years.

Local Liaison Officers who participated in the concluding round of meetings are:

Jackson Whiteknife	Fort Chipewyan
Simon Nanoosh	Garden Creek
John James Antoine	Peace Point
Sharon Dragon	Pine Point
Rene Mercredi	Fort Smith

Parks Canada wishes to extend a word of special appreciation to Rene Mercredi of Fort Smith, the principal Local Liaison Officer throughout this program. Rene monitored the majority of meetings during the three phases of public participation. This task entailed extensive travelling with the Planning Team, sometimes under unpleasant conditions, and many long hours. His comprehensive reports to the Local Liaison Officers on progress of meetings kept everyone well informed. Rene's work was appreciated by everyone involved in this program.

## SUMMARY OF PUBLIC COMMENT

To assist you in understanding the exchange of public comment on the draft management plan, 5 categories have been used to identify comments and suggestions received.

### A. LOCAL COMMUNITIES

Refers to communities directly adjacent to the park: Fort Smith, Fort Chipewyan, Peace Point, Pine Point, Hay River, Fort Resolution and the Little Red River Band communities of Garden Creek, Fox Lake and Jean D'Or Prairie.

### B. OTHER REGIONAL COMMUNITIES

Incorporates communities which do not, at present, have direct access to or regularly use the park: Yellowknife, Fort McMurray, High Level and Fort Vermilion.

### C. SOUTHERN CANADA

Includes input received from the public at meetings in Edmonton and Calgary, and through letters and briefs received from special interest groups, Federal Government Departments and Agencies in Edmonton.

#### SPECIAL INTEREST GROUPS

Include the Canadian Nature Federation (CNF), National/Provincial Parks Association of Canada, Edmonton Chapter (NPPAC Edmonton Chapter), and Edmonton Chamber of Commerce.

#### GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENTS AND AGENCIES INCLUDE:

The Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development, and the Canadian Wildlife Service, both based in Edmonton.

#### OTHER GOVERNMENTS:

Alberta. Representatives from several of their departments attended a meeting to discuss the proposed Management Plan for Wood Buffalo National Park in Edmonton.

### D. WRITTEN RESPONSES

Includes all written comments on the draft Management Plan received from the general public.

### E. LOCAL LIAISON OFFICERS

Includes recommendations and directions put forward by this group.



# ITEM #1: REGIONAL AND INTERNAL ROADS

## A. LOCAL COMMUNITIES

Local communities concentrated their remarks on the Peace River road proposal. Support for the proposal was noted at public meetings in Fort Smith, Fort Chipewyan/Peace Point and Hay River. The Hay River residents suggested that the road be restricted to tourist traffic. They also recommended that a circle route to the south be promoted to permit quicker and easier access to the park. A circle route would increase tourist activity in their area and thus benefit the economy. The Peace Point community favoured construction of a southern access route, outside the park, preferably via Fort McMurray. The local communities encouraged Parks Canada to participate in a joint study with Alberta on regional transportation requirements. They unanimously agreed that additional access to Wood Buffalo National Park is a necessity.

Opposition to the Peace River Road proposal was registered by the communities of Garden Creek, Fox Lake and Jean D'Or Prairie primarily because of the perceived impact this road would have on the community of Garden Creek. The Jean D'Or Prairie meeting noted that if this road became a reality, it should be located further away from Garden Creek to minimize impact on the community.

In commenting on the winter road proposal, the Fort Chipewyan/Peace Point public meeting favoured construction of an all-weather road which would connect Fort Chipewyan to Fort Smith on the east side of the Slave River.

With respect to the loop road proposal, the Fort Smith public meeting noted that upgrading should be limited to a standard which would permit safe, slow travel through the area. No commercial traffic should be allowed. Increased interpretation of features along the road was desired.

## B. OTHER REGIONAL COMMUNITIES

The Peace River Road proposal generated the majority of discussion. Support for the new road was expressed at public and private group meetings in Fort McMurray, Fort Vermilion and High Level. Increased tourism resulting in economic benefits and improved access to recreational areas formed the nucleus of their support for this road proposal. The resulting circle route, if the Peace River road became a reality, was highly desired. The Fort Vermilion public meeting included the proviso that the road be restricted to tourist traffic. Commercial access should not be permitted. Two other concerns expressed at this meeting were that the road not result in increased poaching from tourists and that the wilderness character of WBNP be retained. Participants at the public meeting in High Level and the Board of Administration suggested that Parks Canada must be willing to share expenses with Alberta and the Government of the Northwest Territories as Parks Canada would equally benefit from this road. The High Level Board of Administration supported commercial traffic on this road.

Comment on the loop road proposal was limited to the Government of the N.W.T. who supported the Plan proposal.

### Winter Road

Residents of Fort McMurray supported development of this project on the east side of the Slave River. A Fort McMurray-to-Fort Chipewyan-to-Fort Smith circle route link was a high priority for both recreational and economic reasons.

The High Level public meeting approved the upgrading of highway 5 but urged Parks Canada to share expenses for this undertaking. Wilderness values must remain intact and commercial traffic must be strictly controlled or eliminated.

Miscellaneous items pertaining to regional access noted at meetings included the following:

- (1) Yellowknife public meeting participants requested more access to WBNP from the west.

- (2) Participants at the Fort McMurray public meeting noted that a potential access route to Wood Buffalo National Park could be via the Athabasca River. They requested that Parks Canada take over the responsibility for marking the river to permit safe navigation should this service be terminated by the Canadian Coast Guard upon closure of Uranium City.
- (3) Comments made at meetings in Fort McMurray urged Parks Canada to liaise with Alberta in the development of a regional transportation study.

## C. SOUTHERN CANADA

### Highway 5

Two special interest groups and the Canadian Wildlife Service commented on this proposal. Recommendations from these groups included:

- (1) increasing the number of interpretive facilities along highway #5,
- (2) designing the upgrading in a manner to reflect the road's location in a national park.
- (3) sharing of expenses for this project between Parks Canada and the Government of the Northwest Territories, and,
- (4) the synchronization of Parks Canada's roadside development work with the N.W.T.'s paving schedule.

### Loop Road

A mixture of special interest groups and government agencies commented on the loop road proposal. All were supportive of this project.

One special interest group cautioned that upgrading should be carried out in phases to limit speed. They opposed upgrading the easterly portion of the Loop Road because it passes prime bison habitat and could result in high road kills.

### Winter Road

Three special interest groups, the Alberta Government and the Canadian Wildlife Service expressed opinions on the winter road proposal.

The Edmonton Chamber of Commerce and Alberta Government favoured year-round access between Fort Smith and Fort Chipewyan. One special interest group and the Canadian Wildlife Service supported the concept of year-round access but suggested it be situated east of the Slave River to ensure protection of park values. Another special interest group suggested that a relocation of the existing winter road to eliminate present adverse effects on some park resources would suffice. However, should construction of a new winter road be deemed desirable, in their opinion the preferred route would extend south of the Peace River between the Riviere des Rochers and Chenal des Quatre Fourches. Special interest groups requested that Parks Canada ensure that development of the winter road not be linked to a Slave River hydro project.

### Peace River Road

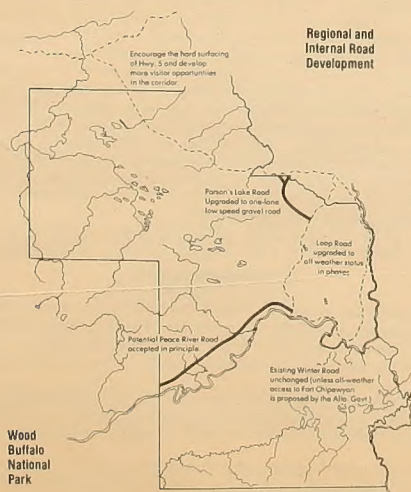
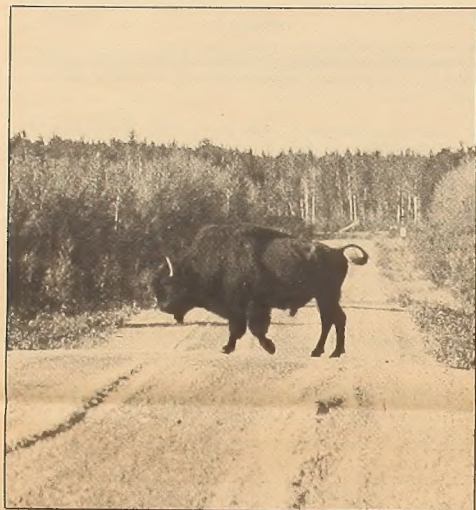
Respondents included the Alberta Government, Edmonton Chamber of Commerce, Canadian Nature Federation, NPPAC (Edmonton Chapter), Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development, Canadian Wildlife Service and participants at the Calgary public meeting.

The Alberta Government and Edmonton Chamber of Commerce supported the proposal because of the economic benefits and improved access to Wood Buffalo National Park this road would produce.

The conservation groups, other Federal agencies and participants at the Calgary public meeting opposed the proposal because in their opinions it:

- (a) contravenes Parks Canada's policy on road corridors,
- (b) encourages travel for convenience reasons, not appreciation of park values,
- (c) has not been referred to the Federal Environmental Assessment and Review Office for evaluation in accordance with environmental assessment procedures, and
- (d) may have a negative impact socially and economically on the community of Garden Creek.

Commercial through-traffic within the park was not favoured as it was felt it would destroy the wilderness character of the park, be disruptive to park visitors and impair the bison wintering range. It was also thought that this road would be an aid in development of the proposed Slave River Hydro project. Construction of a southerly access route **outside** the boundaries of Wood Buffalo National Park was not opposed.



## D. WRITTEN RESPONSES

### Highway 5

A majority of respondents favoured hardsurfacing highway 5 to eliminate or reduce impact. Negative comments reflected the opinion that the park area should not be developed to provide a thoroughfare/transportation function.

### Loop Road

No opposition was expressed concerning the upgrading of the Loop Road. However, one respondent felt it should be done in conjunction with the Fort Chipewyan road upgrading in order to facilitate access to the communities of Pine Point, Peace Point and Fort Chipewyan. Another member of the public advised Parks Canada that it must become closely associated with road upgrading projects to ensure a minimum of resource impacts within Wood Buffalo National Park.

### Winter Road

No opposition to the Winter Road project was received. However, in a few cases it was recommended that the road be situated on the east side of the Slave River.

### Peace River Road

Thirty percent of respondents who commented on this issue strongly opposed the project. In their opinion Parks Canada's role is to interpret the park landscape and resources. Park areas should not be developed to provide a thoroughfare/transportation function as the welfare of neighbouring communities is not Parks Canada's principal concern.

Other respondents supported the southern road concept but only if located **outside** the park. Parks Canada was urged to become closely involved in the design stage of the process to ensure design and road standards are met.

## E. LOCAL LIAISON OFFICERS

### Highway 5

No objections to the proposals were voiced. It was recognized that details must be discussed with the Government of the Northwest Territories before implementation.

### Loop Road

No comment.

### Winter Road

The requirement to involve the Alberta Government in the relocation of this road was recognized. The winter road proposal was considered to be a high priority issue among the Local Liaison Officers as the existing alignment, in their opinion, is dangerous and requires straightening and widening.

### Peace River Road

The Little Red River Band was opposed to this proposal. The members recognized that Parks Canada is not a proponent of the road but that the agency will accept it in principle if other governments are prepared to finance its construction. The Local Liaison Officers discussed possible scenarios which would affect this project as well as costs related to new road development.



## ITEM #2: RAINBOW LAKES DEVELOPMENT

### A. LOCAL COMMUNITIES

The communities of Fort Smith and Pine Point responded to this item. There was general acceptance of the premise that the Rainbow Lakes will be the middle ground between the intensely-used recreational facilities, such as Pine Lake, and the back country.

The Fort Smith public noted that some fish-stocking, preferably of native species, should be carried out. The Pine Point community accepted the proposal contained in the draft Management Plan for the present time, but noted that fish-stocking at other locations, including Rainbow Lakes, would be requested in the future.

### B. OTHER REGIONAL COMMUNITIES

The Fort Vermilion public suggested that some form of modified road access be considered to accommodate people who could not hike into the lakes. It was suggested that a shuttle service concession be operated during peak visitation periods to take these people into and out of the area.

The Fort McMurray Operations Staff strongly supported the introduction of a fish-stocking program.

### C. SOUTHERN CANADA

Comment was received principally from the NPPAC (Edmonton Chapter). The recommendations were generally supported but the contention that "present or projected levels of public demand" should influence the level of visitor service or degree of appropriate resource protection was objected to on the basis that these services and facilities should be available to all visitors, even if numbers are limited.

### D. WRITTEN RESPONSES

Development of a hiking trail system, including short nature trails, was well received. All trails must blend in with the natural environment as much as possible but must also be well marked and maintained to ensure no visitors become lost.

Two clarifications in wording were requested by the public.

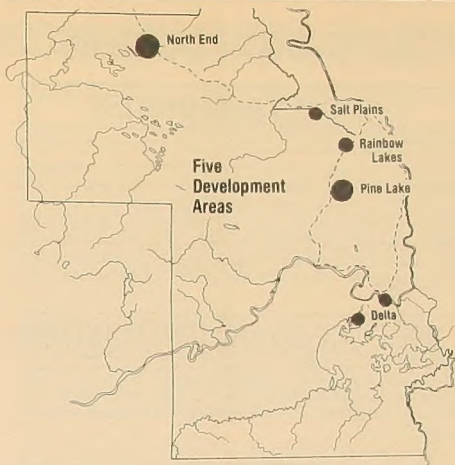
- (1) Non-motorized watercraft should include canoes, rowboats, paddleboats and Ministry of Transport-approved rubber rafts.
- (2) Access to the lakes by bicycle should reflect the sense that only "non-motorized pedal bicycles" will be permitted.

Approximately 25% of newsletter respondents requested a modified fish-stocking program with lakes being stocked only with species native to the region. It was felt that a program of this type would promote relaxation in the outdoors.

### E. LOCAL LIAISON OFFICERS

A road into Rainbow Lakes was recommended as a means of permitting senior citizens and the handicapped access to the area. Making the Rainbow Lakes more accessible would relieve the pressure on the Pine Lake recreation area. In their opinion this road access could easily be developed as the cutline is in place.

Fish-stocking was also encouraged.



## ITEM #3: HWY. 5 CORRIDOR/ NORTH END DEVELOPMENT

### A. LOCAL COMMUNITIES

Local communities did not comment on this topic.

### B. OTHER REGIONAL COMMUNITIES

Comments from regional communities were not offered. No opposition to these proposals was noted.

### C. SOUTHERN CANADA

The Edmonton public meeting and special interest groups supported the Angus Tower interpretation facility and expansion of day-use and interpretive facilities along the corridor although the low use demand for the area was questioned at times. It was also suggested that construction of these facilities be synchronized with GNWT road development.

### D. WRITTEN RESPONSES

Parks Canada was urged to reconsider the proposal to develop an interpretive trail in the vicinity of the Whooping Crane nesting area in view of the potential disruption and danger to the birds. Concern about the lack of controls on motorized use of Needle Lake was registered. No motorized use was felt to be appropriate for this lake. Other suggestions included:

- (a) the installation, on a co-operative basis with the GNWT, of an interpretive exhibit at Little Buffalo Falls. Included in this facility should be a sign indicating the navigability conditions of the river.
- (b) improvement of interpretive and information signage along the Highway 5 corridor, and,
- (c) development of a small camping area at Angus Tower.

### E. LOCAL LIAISON OFFICERS

Discussion centered on access to the Whooping Crane habitat with its potential danger to birds. The Local Liaison Officers requested that Parks Canada and the Canadian Wildlife Service reassess this item to ensure disruption to the birds or their nesting sites is non-existent. All other proposals for the Highway 5 corridor were accepted.



# ITEM #4: SALT PLAINS ACCESS & USE/ PARSON'S LAKE ROAD

## A. LOCAL COMMUNITIES

Limited comment was received from local communities. The Fort Smith public meeting supported the zone #1, special preservation, designation applied to this area. Development at the Salt Plains must be undertaken carefully and be controlled to ensure the area is not destroyed. Access restrictions were recommended to prevent overuse. Guided walks were acceptable as long as staff members were available to conduct this function. The Hay River public meetings supported the interpretive look-out proposed for the escarpment adjacent to the Salt Plains.

## B. OTHER REGIONAL COMMUNITIES

Comment was limited concerning interpretation of the Salt Plains. One community supported the proposal to upgrade the road leading to the site and suggested that a hiking trail to the Salt River bridge be considered as well.

# ITEM #5: PEACE-ATHABASCA DELTA

## A. LOCAL COMMUNITIES

The Fort Chipewyan/Peace Point public meeting supported the proposals. Because of the dangerous nature of the area, these people expressed the view that use of outfitters should be encouraged and, in fact, become compulsory. The minimum acceptable precaution stated was that tourists in the Peace-Athabasca Delta region must obtain outback country permits. Other local communities did not express viewpoints on this item.

## B. OTHER REGIONAL COMMUNITIES

Proposals presented in the draft Management Plan were supported by the Fort McMurray municipal group meeting.

## C. SOUTHERN CANADA

The special interest groups and Calgary public meeting supported the general intent of the proposals. Their suggestions to Parks Canada included:

- (1) caution in siting camping facilities to ensure no disturbance of wildlife and no pollution;
- (2) guided trips by local residents; and
- (3) prohibition of motorboats.

## D. WRITTEN RESPONSES

Low intensity public use was encouraged. Use of guides and outfitters should remain the choice of visitors. A brochure describing the features of interest, hazards in the Delta, and benefits of using local guides should be prepared and distributed to the Delta visitors. Development of outfitting and guiding services by local residents was desired. Parks Canada was urged to monitor such services to ensure high quality.

## E. LOCAL LIAISON OFFICERS

Items discussed included public safety; control of visitor use in the Delta; protection of Park resources; protection to Delta trappers; and economic benefits to the area accruing from tourism. The Local Liaison Officers stated that in their opinion, visitors to the Peace-Athabasca Delta should be required to use guides as there is the potential for people to get lost. Visitors wishing to explore the park alone should travel by river and existing roads.

## C. SOUTHERN CANADA

Comment was varied. The Canadian Wildlife Service opposed ground access to the Salt Plains in view of its sensitivity and Class #1 Zoning. Trails and/or boardwalks would encourage uncontrolled access. One special interest group viewed roadway improvements as being contrary to the wilderness character of Wood Buffalo National Park. Another group expressed support for the Salt Plains overview with increased interpretive facilities and the loop drive incorporating the adjacent Mission Farm Road as long as environmental impact is negligible. However, they opposed the public canoe launch proposal on the basis that it would allow uncontrolled access to the Salt Plains. Upgrading the Parson's Lake road was considered to be unnecessary.

## D. WRITTEN RESPONSES

The majority of respondents did not comment - approximately 20% opposed road development for fear it would damage the environment and, in the case of the Mission Farm Road proposal, encourage poaching. Another group (again 20%) were of the opinion that the number of hikers on the Salt Flats should be monitored to ensure protection of this fragile terrain. Several people suggested non-guided hiking should be permitted. The last 20% approved the proposals as presented in the draft Management Plan.

## E. LOCAL LIAISON OFFICERS

No objections to the proposals were noted but caution with respect to the sensitivity of the area was raised.

# ITEM #6: PINE LAKE

## A. LOCAL COMMUNITIES

The Fort Smith public meeting supported development of a day-use facility on the east side of Pine Lake. Other local communities did not comment.

## B. OTHER REGIONAL COMMUNITIES

The High Level public meeting supported development as per the draft Management Plan recommendations. Other communities in this category did not comment.

## C. SOUTHERN CANADA

Comments were received from three special interest groups. The draft plan proposals received qualified support. These groups would like motor boat use on Pine Lake excluded and fish-stocking restricted to native species. The quality of the Pine Lake campsite was complimented.

## D. WRITTEN RESPONSES

Limited commercial development at Pine Lake was favoured. The preferred amenity was a small convenience store for such items as milk, film, etc. The walk-in campground on the east side of the lake generated positive comment. A few people opposed fish-stocking of any kind. It was suggested that motorboat use be monitored to ensure the wilderness experience is not impaired.

## E. LOCAL LIAISON OFFICERS

The group felt the existing campsite should be moved closer to the lake.





## ITEM #7: PINE LAKE COTTAGES

### A. LOCAL COMMUNITIES

The Fort Smith and Hay River public meetings accepted the principle of private cottages being retained at the Pine Lake facility until the area is required for public use. Other local communities did not comment on this issue.

### B. OTHER REGIONAL COMMUNITIES

These communities (mainly the Fort McMurray and High Level public meetings) did not oppose retention of the cottages as long as the land was not needed for public facilities to accommodate increased visitation. Discussions with the GNWT in Yellowknife focussed on options for the cottage area when visitation statistics indicate the area is required for public use.

### C. SOUTHERN CANADA

Comments from southern Canada strongly opposed the draft plan proposal. It was felt that no provision should be made for extended tenure. Rather, Parks Canada should comply with the intent of its policy to eliminate non-conforming uses in national parks. Southern communities felt the issue must be dealt with now or it will remain forever. Support was expressed for the relocation grant proposal. It was also suggested that this grant be adjusted for inflation.

### D. WRITTEN RESPONSES

Out of 25 written responses received, 52% did not comment. Twenty percent (20%) concurred with the proposals, and the remaining 28% strongly opposed the continuation of the cottage sub-division. Opposing statements referred to the problems related to cottage use in other national parks, contravention of Parks Canada's own policies and Act and concern over preferential treatment allotted to a few people. In several instances, a long term - but definite - phase out was recommended.

### E. LOCAL LIAISON OFFICERS

Discussion focussed on privileged versus public use of park lands, and on the future of the cottage lots. Local Liaison Officers accepted the proposal for the present but felt Parks Canada should take steps to remove the cottages by the first 5-year review of the plan if possible.

## ITEM #8: AIR ACCESS

### A. LOCAL COMMUNITIES

Several local communities emphasized the need for controls to ensure tourists entering the backcountry do not cause environmental damage or negatively affect traditional resource harvesting activities. Use of outfitters and backcountry permits was highlighted. The Fort Smith public meeting opposed air access to traplines by the native population as it was thought to be inconsistent with a traditional activity. Parks Canada must ensure air travel does not become the only means for tourists to see the park.

### B. OTHER REGIONAL COMMUNITIES

Opinions expressed paralleled those voiced in the local communities. Visitor air access was felt to be permissible if controlled by flight plans or undertaken as part of a trip escorted by an outfitter and authorized by a back-country use permit. The Fort Vermilion public did not object to trappers utilizing aircraft to gain access to their traplines. The High Level public thought more provision should be made to accommodate landings to enable people to fish, hike, etc. in various areas of the park.

### C. SOUTHERN CANADA

Comments from all southern Canada sources urged extreme caution concerning air access. Strict controls, including the numbers of landings allowed, must be mandatory and be specified in the plan document if aircraft use were permitted. Two special interest groups opposed air access for visitor use purposes. Others were concerned about the effects air access could have on wildlife in sensitive areas of the Park; e.g. Whooping Crane nesting ground, Bison and other breeding areas. Liaison with Transport Canada to investigate ways of controlling aircraft through companion legislation was encouraged. These measures must be written into the Management Plan, itself.

### D. WRITTEN RESPONSES

Respondents either strongly opposed or supported the draft proposals. Positive remarks focussed on the benefits of air access for interpreting park features and landscape. The majority of respondents opposed air access for reasons including the negative effect on the wilderness character of the Park, noise pollution, potential contradictions in Policy statements versus contents of the WBNP Management Plan, harassment of wildlife, requirement to monitor guides to ensure they adhere to rules and guidelines established to control the activity, and because it contravenes provisions of the Parks Canada Policy. Should air access become a reality, Parks Canada must ensure all access will be by float-equipped aircraft and minimum height regulations must be enforced.

### E. LOCAL LIAISON OFFICERS

The group discussed the degree of control any one agency could have on air access related to visitor use. Air access to the backcountry could, in their opinion, pose a threat to the trappers' assets. It was recommended that together Parks Canada and Transport Canada develop a plan and appropriate mechanisms to control visitor air access into the Park.



## ITEM #9: WATER ACCESS

### A. LOCAL COMMUNITIES

Local communities had little to say about these proposals. None expressed opposition to them. The recommended use of guides to escort visitors in the Peace-Athabasca Delta and Parks Canada's practice of assisting guides by providing expertise and recommendations, received support.

### B. OTHER REGIONAL COMMUNITIES

Few comments were received. The use of non-motorized craft was recommended as a means of maintaining the wilderness character of the Park.

### C. SOUTHERN CANADA

Comment from southern regions was received principally through special interest groups and government agencies. They questioned the proposed construction of a boat launch facility at Fort Fitzgerald, which is located outside the park boundary, as its benefit to both the park and park visitors is doubtful. The facility's relationship to the proposed Slave River Hydro Project was also raised.

Use of powered watercraft generated comment from two special interest groups. They expressed the opinion that extensive use of motorized craft could lead to deterioration of the park experience. One special interest group recommended that motor boats be restricted to channels open to commercial shipping.

### D. WRITTEN RESPONSES

Written comments centered on the use of waterways as a means of interpreting the park. Recommendations included the need for Parks Canada to distinguish between water access as a means for interpreting the park, and water as a recreation for boating. Recreational boating was not favoured; water access for interpretive purposes was encouraged. Parks Canada was requested:

- (1) to have clear signs erected at all launching facilities, and
- (2) to provide detailed information about routes and navigational hazards.

Over-use of park resources, through air access, extensive water use, more and upgraded roads, was viewed by some respondents as possibly leading to a reduction of the wilderness values of the park.

### E. LOCAL LIAISON OFFICERS

The Local Liaison Officers did not comment on these proposals.

## ITEM #10: ADMINISTRATION AND OPERATION

### A. LOCAL COMMUNITIES

Comments were received from the native communities of Garden Creek, Fox Lake, Jean D'Or Prairie and Fort Resolution who favoured the establishment of a warden station at Garden Creek. They also reaffirmed their conviction that the Fort Chipewyan Warden facility must be maintained.

### B. OTHER REGIONAL COMMUNITIES

These communities had no negative reactions to the draft plan proposals. Use of the Hay Camp Fire Control Base for outdoor education purposes was welcomed. It was suggested this type of activity be expanded to other areas of the park. Native hiring practices were complimented. A system whereby northern suppliers would be advised of Parks Canada's supply requirements was recommended to facilitate northern commerce.

### C. SOUTHERN CANADA

Proposals pertaining to development of an upgraded administration/visitor services facility located in a prominent site in Fort Smith, use of Hay Camp as an outdoor education base, and establishment of a Warden Station at Garden Creek, generated positive comment primarily from the special interest groups and government agencies.

Parks Canada's presence in native communities such as Garden Creek and Fort Chipewyan was deemed necessary to maintain contact and good relations with the native peoples.

### D. WRITTEN RESPONSES

The proposals contained in the draft Management Plan were supported. Interpretive programs in communities in proximity to the park was recommended.

### E. LOCAL LIAISON OFFICERS

Local Liaison Officers noted that the Garden Creek residents were receptive to the idea of a warden station being located in that community and the employment potential which may result. They also supported proposals for improving staff housing in Fort Chipewyan.

## ITEM #11: REGIONAL TOURISM

### A. LOCAL COMMUNITIES

Local communities generally supported the recommendations. Improved access to the park was mentioned as a priority requirement by the majority of local communities. The Pine Point and Hay River participants felt that additional development is required in the areas of campsites, hiking trails and parking facilities, but because of high costs recommended it be done in the second five year phase of the management plan. It was also suggested that Parks Canada put its interpretive programs on video tape and have them made available to schools and libraries across Canada as a means of promoting tourism to the area. Information was sought by several local communities on the type of assistance Parks Canada offers natives who wish to become outfitters.

### B. OTHER REGIONAL COMMUNITIES

Meetings in Yellowknife emphasized a requirement for improved access to the park, particularly in the western sector. The need for separate plans to supplement the Management Plan was identified. Areas of socio-economic development and resource management were two examples cited. The communities of Fort McMurray, High Level and Fort Vermilion strongly urged Parks Canada to encourage greater visitor use of the Park, and to improve methods used for compiling visitor statistics. Their impression, strongly stated, is that Parks Canada is hesitant to allow the public to visit this park. Road access for visitor use was viewed as a means of encouraging tourism; commercial transportation routes in the park were not favoured. A circle route was highly desired by the majority of regional communities. With respect to information and interpretive items, these communities suggested that printed articles, slide shows and films on the park should be made available to a broader segment of the public to increase awareness and appreciation of the park resources. The concept of adjacent communities providing visitor amenities such as hotels and restaurants was supported.



## C. SOUTHERN CANADA

Increased visitor use and improved compilation of visitor statistics was requested by all special interest groups even though they appreciated that determining the level of promotion appropriate for a wilderness national park is a difficult issue. The public must be given a realistic picture of this wilderness environment. Use of licensed guides and outfitters by visitors to the backcountry areas was strongly supported. The provision of tourist amenities within communities surrounding the Park was supported. Other government agencies agreed with the proposals presented.

## D. WRITTEN RESPONSES

The use of guides and outfitters was strongly encouraged, however, it was suggested that Parks Canada closely monitor and evaluate their services to ensure high quality. Other respondents suggested that a small convenience store be introduced near campgrounds, and particularly at Pine Lake. Location of tourist amenities in adjacent communities was well received.

## E. LOCAL LIAISON OFFICERS

No specific comments were presented.

# ITEM #12: LAND USE ZONING

## A. LOCAL COMMUNITIES

Land use zoning proposals elicited minimal comment. Additional public information on the designation of special preservation areas was requested.

## B. OTHER REGIONAL COMMUNITIES

None of the regional community groups commented on land use zoning.

## C. SOUTHERN CANADA

The concept of extensive special preservation areas was agreed to by a majority of respondents. Special interest groups and the C.W.S. emphasized the importance of special preservation zones.

### ZONE #1

The Canadian Wildlife Service and Canadian Nature Federation strongly opposed the reduction of zone #1, special preservation areas from those designated earlier in the planning program. Parks Canada was requested to re-zone 1 those areas originally designated as such or to provide the public with specific reasons as to why nine sites were removed from the zone #1 category.

As a means of reaffirming its commitment to protect the Peace-Alta-basca Delta, it was suggested that the **entire** Delta region be assigned the zone #1 classification.

The Canadian Nature Federation urged Parks Canada to ensure adequate protection for the bat and red-sided garter snake hibernating sites as they are critical to the survival of these species in a boreal environment.

The addition of the Darough Creek Meadows as a zone #1 area received support. It was suggested that the Slave River Lowlands and Peace River Meanders be incorporated in this grouping. The NPPAC (Edmonton Chapter) requested that the proposed boundary for the Whooping Crane nesting area include a sufficiently large buffer to allow for possible expansion in breeding territory and minimize dangers to this internationally-significant resource. Parks Canada was encouraged to liaise closely with the Canadian Wildlife Service to define precise boundaries for the zone #1 area.

### ZONE #2

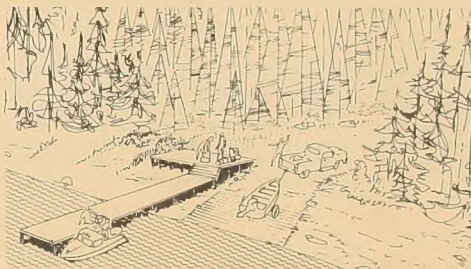
Three groups provided input on zone #2 items. Two groups supported the proposals as presented. One special interest group opposed air access to the back country as they felt it contravenes National Park Policy.

### ZONE #3

It was suggested that other areas of Wood Buffalo National Park be included in this zone #3 category, namely:

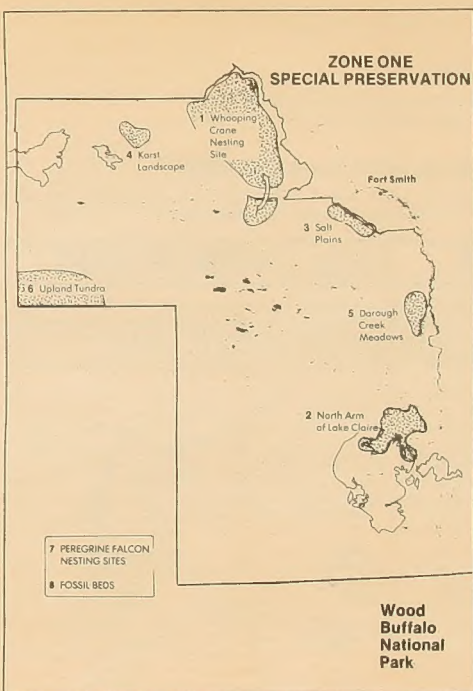
- the Pine Lake area
- south and west area of Parson's Lake Road
- portions of the Angus Till Plain south of highway #5 and west of the Peace Point Road.

Removal of the zone #3 classification from the water surfaces of Lake Claire (major waterfowl habitat) and Lake Mamawi (year-round bison habitat) was recommended as these areas were felt to warrant greater protection.



### ZONE #4

Two special interest groups and one government agency responded to this item. Each was supportive of the recommendations. In one instance, it was suggested that the Peace Point area be rezoned as Class #1, special preservation.





## D. WRITTEN RESPONSES

### ZONE #1

Comments pertaining to zone #1 were generally favourable. A number of suggestions relating to specific resources and the application of a zone #1 designation were received. Examples of suggestions ranged from including the archaeological sites and the caves of this category, to establishing a buffer zone in the area as a means of providing greater protection to wildlife resources. Strict control of zone #1 areas was urged by all respondents.

### ZONE #2

Respondents who commented on zone #2 agreed with Parks Canada's proposals to apply the wilderness zone category to the majority of Wood Buffalo National Park. Minimum facilities, limited motorized access, and hiking and canoeing activities were strongly encouraged.

### ZONE #3

Respondents supported the designation of zone #3 to limited areas as they desired control of visitor use through monitoring and regulating the use of access routes, boating, and outfitter activities to maintain a respectable natural setting. It was agreed that the majority of public services should be handled in adjacent communities. Some respondents recommended that the definition of zone #3 be clarified to improve the public's understanding of it. Better and more maps, with legends, were requested.

### ZONE #4

Most respondents concurred with these proposals. They expressed their opinion that:

- (1) recreational sites should be limited to preserve the Park's wilderness state (same as for zone #3);
- (2) a resort-type environment must not evolve;
- (3) access should permit visitors to obtain an appreciation of the park;
- (4) in strategic locations, some type of convenience store should be considered near campgrounds.

### ZONE #5

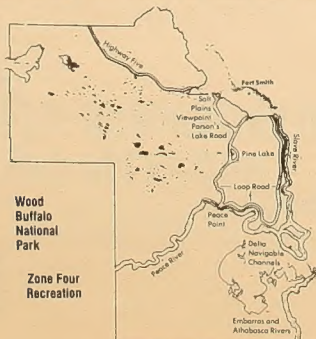
Respondents agreed with Parks Canada's proposal to not designate a zone #5 area in Wood Buffalo National Park.

### BURIAL GROUNDS AND CEMETERIES

Comment was limited. The few people who did respond concurred with the contents of the draft Management Plan.

## E. LOCAL LIAISON OFFICERS

The group did not oppose the reduction of zone #1 areas. Hunting and trapping activities, and the relationship between the land use zoning plan, fire management zones and seed zones were items discussed.



## ITEM #13: BISON MANAGEMENT

### A. LOCAL COMMUNITIES

These groups approved the proposals concerning Bison Management. The Fort Chipewyan/Peace Point meeting requested assurances from Parks Canada to the effect that bison will not be chased by vehicles or aircraft as was previously done during round-ups. Questions pertaining to the nature of bison management techniques to be employed during epidemic outbreaks of anthrax were raised by the Fort Resolution community. They expressed more confidence in current measures employed by Parks Canada to control epidemics and dispose of diseased animals.

### B. OTHER REGIONAL COMMUNITIES

The size of the herd at Wood Buffalo National Park was a source of concern to several regional communities. Each expressed the view that Parks Canada should investigate methods which could serve to increase the size of the herd. The Fort Vermilion Board of Trade meeting recommended that Parks Canada endeavour to develop a strain of pure Wood Bison. They, and the participants at the Fort McMurray meetings, were amenable to Parks Canada not carrying out inoculation programs under normal conditions. However, Parks Canada was urged to include a contingency plan for disease control, particularly during epidemic outbreaks, as part of the Management Plan.

### C. SOUTHERN CANADA

Input from southern Canada was supportive of Parks Canada's bison management proposals. It was recommended that bison survey schedules, and research proposals into the population dynamics of the bison, be incorporated in the Management Plan for WBNP.

A major concern related to bison management is the potential threat to the bison's winter habitat should the Slave River Hydro project proceed.

Designation of the Peace-Athabasca Delta and Slave River lowlands as a zone #1, special preservation area, was recommended to ensure protection of the bison.

## D. WRITTEN RESPONSES

Protection of the herd and an increase in its numbers was encouraged by write-in respondents. Response to this item was minimal but those who did respond approved the contents of the Management Plan proposals.

### E. LOCAL LIAISON OFFICERS

Local Liaison Officers concurred with the position presented in the draft Management Plan which allows the herd to exist naturally.



## ITEM #14: TIMBER HARVESTING

### A. LOCAL COMMUNITIES

Comment was received from the communities of Pine Point and Garden Creek. Both expressed support of the agreement for co-operative management between Parks Canada and Canfor, the timber berth operator, but reiterated that Parks Canada must develop strict guidelines for the company to follow and monitor the timber operation regularly. The proposed reforestation requirement received uniform approval.

### B. OTHER REGIONAL COMMUNITIES

The Fort McMurray and Fort Vermilion public meetings agreed with Parks Canada's approach on this issue but would like the timber harvesting activity terminated prior to 2002. The Boards of Administration from communities west of the park encouraged timber harvesting because of economic and employment-oriented benefits. The timber management agreement, with its reforestation and research projects, resource monitoring and environmental assessment provisions, was considered to be an excellent action.

### C. SOUTHERN CANADA

Input from southern Canada reflected opposition to the logging activity in Wood Buffalo National Park. It was strongly suggested that Parks Canada purchase the lease as soon as possible and terminate logging. A reduction in logging activity should be realized in the intervening period.

Proposed arrangements to improve management of the timber berth and reduce environmental impact were acceptable to all southern Canada groups for the present time.

Proposals for domestic use of timber generated mixed comment. Five of the southern Canada groups did not oppose this activity but stressed that Parks Canada must monitor this function to ensure valuable park resources are not lost. Others felt no timber harvesting of any sort should be permitted. Participants at the Edmonton Drop-In commented that timber harvesting could be a useful management tool. The Canadian Wildlife Service suggested the Peace River meanders (including the timber berth) be classified as zone #1.

### D. WRITTEN RESPONSES

Written comment was evenly divided on this issue. Forty percent did not comment. Thirty percent strongly opposed timber harvesting and urged Parks Canada to buy out the lease immediately. A further 30% agreed with the proposals presented.

### E. LOCAL LIAISON OFFICERS

The group requested that Parks Canada introduce a reforestation project in the timber berth area. It was agreed that the timber company's detailed cutting plans will be forwarded to the Little Red River Band (Garden Creek) for information. The native communities would like to have domestic timber harvesting included as a provision of the Management Plan.

## ITEM #15: HUNTING AND TRAPPING ACTIVITIES

### A. LOCAL COMMUNITIES

All local communities expressed an opinion on this issue. The Fort Smith public meeting objected to trappers being flown into their trapline area for, in their opinion, air access is a non-traditional activity. All communities were willing to participate in the "seed" or protection zone proposal. Regular discussions between the hunters/trappers and Park Wardens on the seed zone concept and other matters related to the resource harvesting activity were requested by all native communities. The proposal, whereby the Wood Buffalo National Park Game Regulations would be written into simple English so they could be easily understood, received unanimous support from local communities.

The process used to amend the Wood Buffalo Game Regulations and some of the clauses which require amendments were discussed at these meetings.

### B. OTHER REGIONAL COMMUNITIES

Little response was generated. Regional communities felt this was an issue to be resolved between Parks Canada and the native hunters and trappers.

### C. SOUTHERN CANADA

The protection or "seed" zone concept was approved with varying qualifications such as:

- (1) regulating the number of hunters/trappers to avoid over-exploitation;
- (2) ensuring people were not displaced;
- (3) ensuring there is mutual agreement between Parks Canada and the people involved with respect to implementation of this resource management concept but that ultimate management control will remain with Parks Canada; and
- (4) monitoring the programs intensively to evaluate the benefits or drawbacks of the program.

The Calgary public meeting participants encouraged the introduction of strict penalties against poachers.

### D. WRITTEN RESPONSES

Approximately 25% of write-in respondents opposed the continuation of hunting and trapping in Wood Buffalo National Park on the basis that it is inconsistent with the Parks Canada policy. They suggested the activity be moved outside the Park with a phase-out occurring over a period of time. The majority of respondents (68%) supported the draft plan, with qualifications which paralleled those expressed by the southern Canadian groups. Suggestions included:

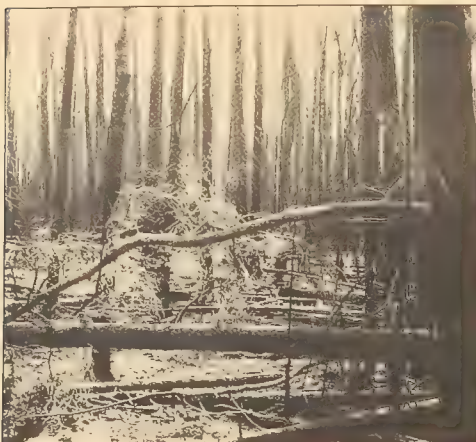
- (1) assessing strong penalties against those who break the WBNP Game Regulations;
- (2) improving wildlife practices;
- (3) regular consultation between resource harvesters and park wardens; and,
- (4) a quota on numbers of trappers and animals to be taken.

### E. LOCAL LIAISON OFFICERS

The Local Liaison Officers reaffirmed the continuance of resource harvesting by eligible hunters and trappers. Establishment of "seed" zones must be a co-operative exercise between the park trappers/hunters and Parks Canada. The boundaries for "seed" areas and periods for which they will be designated must be flexible. Resource harvesting activities are viewed as part of the aboriginal rights issue. The Local Liaison Officers pointed out that seed zones could be beneficial to the trappers in that it would ensure continuation of park wildlife resources.

The Local Liaison Officer Committee endorsed the proposal to permit construction of small dams and weirs in the Peace-Athabasca Delta as an interim arrangement. The need to work out the details of this program with the Alberta Government, Parks Canada's monitoring role, and the responsibility of trappers to construct dams without financial assistance was discussed.





## ITEM #16: FIRE MANAGEMENT

### A. LOCAL COMMUNITIES

The Fort Smith public meeting was the only group amongst Local Communities which offered an opinion. They accepted the proposals but suggested that initial attempts to suppress fires in areas which are particularly fire prone not be undertaken.

### B. OTHER REGIONAL COMMUNITIES

No opposition was reflected in comments submitted by four regional groups. The Yellowknife public meeting suggested that a fire history study become a component of the WBNP Management Plan. In Fort McMurray a request was received for information on Parks Canada's position respecting controlled burning in WBNP.

### C. SOUTHERN CANADA

Response was limited. The Edmonton Drop-In suggested Parks Canada increase its activity in the realm of fire management and include more in-depth study of new techniques. One special interest group and one government agency agreed with Parks Canada's proposal to not compensate trappers for property lost from forest fires. The Alberta Government requested that Parks Canada liaise with them when developing plans for fighting fires on or near the Alberta border.

### D. WRITTEN RESPONSES

Seventy-two percent of write-in respondents did not comment on this topic. One respondent urged the establishment of a fire protection system to reduce human-caused fires. Another respondent stated that any relocation of trappers who were displaced by fires should occur **outside** the park. One other individual opposed the use of fire as a management tool in national parks.

### E. LOCAL LIAISON OFFICERS

The group agreed all fires should be actioned initially. Discussion then centered on compensation programs existing in the Northwest Territories and Alberta, and types of insurance available. There was no opposition to the draft Management Plan proposals.

## ITEM #17: COMMERCIAL FISHING

### A. LOCAL COMMUNITIES

Comment was limited but generally supportive of draft Management Plan proposals. The Fort Chipewyan/Peace Point residents favoured the reintroduction of commercial fishing in the area now that appropriate regulations exist and knowledgeable Park Wardens are on staff. Commercial fishing would enhance their economic base in their view.

### B. OTHER REGIONAL COMMUNITIES

The limited comment received endorsed the draft plan proposals. The Fort McMurray public meeting supported a local community-use-only form of commercial fishing.

### C. SOUTHERN CANADA

Parks Canada's position as stated in the draft Management Plan was accepted by all southern groups

### D. WRITTEN RESPONSES

Limited comment was received. Respondents who did offer an opinion concurred with the proposal. Fishing for local community consumption was accepted.

### E. LOCAL LIAISON OFFICERS

Information was exchanged about pollution in Lake Athabasca and its impact on the fishery. The proposed no commercial fishing policy was accepted. It was agreed Parks Canada would monitor the incannu species in Buffalo Lakes and encourage other agencies to introduce management measures to prevent over-exploitation.





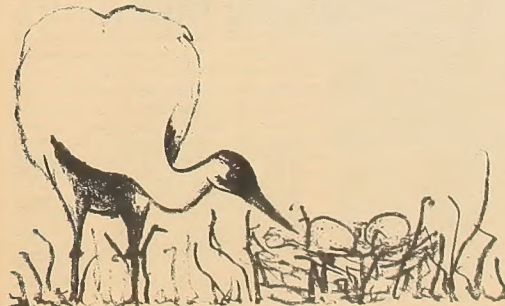
## ITEM #18: PEACE-ATHABASCA DELTA

### A. LOCAL COMMUNITIES

The Fort Chipewyan/Peace Point community meeting supported proposals for management of the Peace-Athabasca Delta. The water-management item, in particular, met their approval. The participants unanimously recognized that the Peace-Athabasca Delta must be monitored closely and regularly, and that public consultation on management programs being considered must become a general practice. Other local communities did not express an opinion on this issue.

### B. OTHER REGIONAL COMMUNITIES

The importance of the Peace-Athabasca Delta was reflected during meetings with the public at Fort McMurray and Fort Vermilion, and by the High Level Board of Trade. All three groups stressed the importance of the Peace-Athabasca Delta and a deep concern over the low water levels presently existing there. Introduction of additional and improved water management programs and intense monitoring of the entire Delta was emphasized.



### C. SOUTHERN CANADA

The majority of southern Canada respondents emphasized the international as well as national importance of the Peace-Athabasca Delta. A policy of total resource protection and environmental monitoring was requested. The Canadian Wildlife Service recommended that the entire Delta be classified as zone #1, special protection. Special interest groups and public meetings in Edmonton supported the proposed water management programs as long as they adhered to the Parks Canada Policy and ecological changes which could adversely affect the wildlife, waterfowl and bison in particular, were avoided. The Alberta Government opposed the construction of small scale trappers' dams. It was also suggested that when programs which still affect the entire Peace-Athabasca Delta are proposed, public consultation should be extended to the wider public which has an interest in this area.

### D. WRITTEN RESPONSES

Comments concentrated on the current low water situation. Restoration of the natural water regime should be undertaken if feasible. Proposed construction of small-scale dams produced mixed responses. Some people felt these dams could interfere with the natural life cycles in the Delta. Other respondents suggested that no changes should be made to the water levels in the Delta until the Slave River Hydro Project proposal is resolved. Others felt that current levels of human activity, such as recreation and the traditional lifestyle, has limited the degree of resource protection that could be achieved.

### E. LOCAL LIAISON OFFICERS

The Local Liaison Officers concurred with the proposal to reactivate the Peace-Athabasca Delta Implementation Committee. They felt Parks Canada should take a strong stand on the Slave River hydro project proposal to ensure protection of the Peace-Athabasca Delta.



## ITEM #19: PARK BOUNDARIES

### A. LOCAL COMMUNITIES

Proposed boundary changes to resolve administrative problems were sanctioned by those who commented. The Fort Chipewyan/Peace Point and Jean D'Or Prairie groups noted that once resurveyed, the boundaries must be clearly marked to indicate National Park and Provincial/Territorial lands. The mechanism preferred to mark areas is each jurisdiction's signs.

General opinion with respect to major boundary proposals was that more public discussion should take place when negotiations begin. Residents of Pine Point expressed concern about the value of mineral resources in the area that would be exchanged. Native communities were concerned about the impact of boundary changes on communities in and adjacent to the park.

### B. OTHER REGIONAL COMMUNITIES

These communities did not object to any of the boundary change proposals. They expressed support for including natural themes not currently represented in Wood Buffalo National Park. The need to give special consideration to the Garden Creek community was noted by several regional communities.

### C. SOUTHERN CANADA

Comment was obtained from all groups. Boundary changes to resolve operational problems were endorsed. With respect to major boundary changes, suggestions included:

- (1) an assessment of resources in the exchange areas to ensure no resource of benefit to the Park is lost;
- (2) relocation of the boundary north of Highway #5 to place all lands in the Lobstick Creek area under Park Canada's jurisdiction; and
- (3) extensive public consultation on major boundary change proposals. One special interest group voiced support of boundary adjustments in the Birch and Caribou Mountain areas. In one case the concept of exchanging lands as opposed to deleting areas to reduce the size of the park generated negative comment.

### D. WRITTEN RESPONSES

Respondents supported these proposals. The need for careful, detailed planning prior to actually undertaking major land exchanges, to ensure Parks Canada does not sacrifice areas of significance, was pointed out. Inclusion of the Birch and Caribou Mountain blocks within Wood Buffalo National Park was supported.



### E. LOCAL LIAISON OFFICERS

The Committee recommended that all Park boundaries be re-surveyed, re-cut and re-described. The priority areas should be the Peace-Althabasca Delta and adjacent to Fort Chipewyan. It was also recommended that boundary changes at the north end of the Park result in a boundary at least 500 metres away from highway #5 in order to protect wildlife populations. It was also recommended that boundaries be hand-cut, as it would create employment and because hand-cut lines do not grow in as quickly as machine cut lines.

With respect to major boundary changes, it was stressed that lengthy negotiations with the public, along with various levels of government, would be required. Local Liaison Officers supported the Little Red River Band in opposing the excision of Garden Creek from the Park. Land claim areas will be removed from the Park when the issue is resolved.

## ITEM #20: SLAVE RIVER HYDRO PROJECT

### A. LOCAL COMMUNITIES

The communities of Pine Point, Hay River and Fort Resolution opposed the proposed hydro project. Discussions involved potential locations of dam sites and effects of each. Pine Point residents noted that if the N.W.T. were to experience downstream effects from the dam, no matter which site is selected, the project should be built in the N.W.T. so the Territories could realize some economic benefits. The Hay River public noted that unless the N.W.T. obtains very cheap hydro electricity from this project, there is no concrete reasons why it should be placed in the N.W.T. The Fort Resolution community adamantly opposed the project and urged Parks Canada to take a very firm stand on the issue. Flooding at Fort Fitzgerald and the Peace-Althabasca Delta was a major concern of these groups. The Fort Resolution residents voiced strong concern about the water quality in the region and effects of a dam on fish. They requested that Parks Canada closely monitor water quality for mineral content and pollutants. All groups commended Parks Canada for referring the issue to the Federal Environmental and Review Office for an evaluation but maintained that Parks Canada must adhere to its conservation mandate and not compromise this issue.

The Hay River public opposed the development of additional transmission corridors in the Park for aesthetic reasons and the danger they represent to the Whooping Crane. Parks Canada should insist that other routes outside the park be utilized.

### B. OTHER REGIONAL COMMUNITIES

Groups in the communities of Fort Vermilion and High Level recognized Parks Canada's concerns over environmental impacts, but supported the dam for economic reasons. These people would like the dam constructed without it impacting negatively on the Park. All groups who commented were concerned about the effects the dam would create on the Park wildlife (Bison and Whooping Crane, in particular) and in the Peace-Althabasca Delta. Opposition to the dam was voiced by the Fort Vermilion Board of Trade, and participants at the Fort McMurray public meeting. Both groups concurred with Parks Canada's referral of the project to the Federal Environmental Assessment and Review office but, in addition, they would like the agency to maintain a consistently strong stand against any form of negative impact on WBNP as a result of the hydro project. Effects on the Peace-Althabasca Delta and other water management programs being considered by Alberta were being discussed at length.



## C. SOUTHERN CANADA

Unanimous opposition to the proposed Slave River Hydro Project was registered by the majority of participants at the public meetings, by all special interest groups and the Canadian Wildlife Service. Chief concerns were the drastic environmental effects which could occur in the Peace-Athabasca Delta and other areas of the Park should the project proceed. All comment emphasized that Parks Canada must not accept any negative impact on WBNP lands or support developments that would jeopardize the ecological integrity of the park. Parks Canada's "no flooding" position was highly complimented. It was stressed that this position must be continued indefinitely. Parks Canada's statement to the effect that altered or inundated lands would be excised from the park, proposed earlier in the planning program, generated concern. This position was viewed as being inconsistent with Parks Canada's current stand.

Participants at the Edmonton Drop-In maintained a neutral position although they stated that Parks Canada must take all necessary steps to protect areas in the park from flooding, and emphasized that Parks Canada Policy must be adhered to.

### TRANSMISSION CORRIDORS

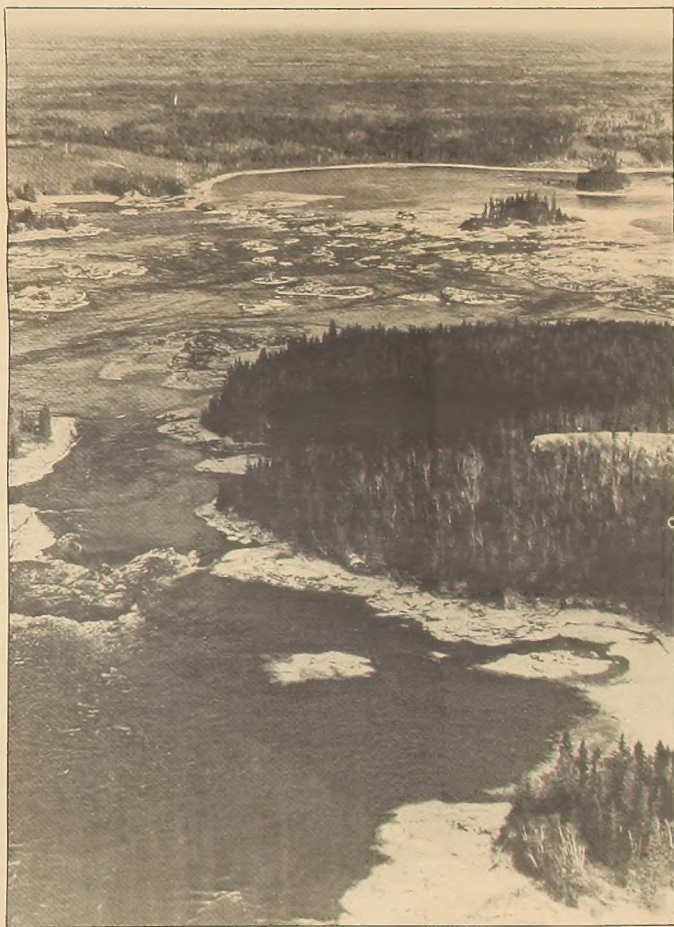
Participants at public meetings in Fort Vermilion, High Level and Hay River recommended that transmission line corridors not be established **anywhere** in the Park.

## D. WRITTEN RESPONSES

A majority of write-in respondents strongly opposed the Slave River Hydro Project proposal and urged Parks Canada to maintain a strong "no flooding" stand to protect the resources of Wood Buffalo National Park. Opinions paralleled those given by regional communities and southern Canada. A few respondents expressed support for the hydro project primarily for economic reasons.

## E. LOCAL LIAISON OFFICERS

Local Liaison Officers suggested that Parks Canada may have to take a stronger stand on this issue depending on what the Alberta Government decides to do. Discussion touched on the possible impacts from the dam as well as concerns regarding transmission corridors.





## ITEM #21: GARDEN CREEK

### A. LOCAL COMMUNITIES

Representatives of the Little Red River Band expressed strong opposition to the potential excision of the Garden Creek community from Wood Buffalo National Park. All local communities concurred with the concept of a co-operative management arrangement whereby Indian Affairs would assume control of all activities related to services and the community would remain on national park land. The Garden Creek residents endorsed the provision whereby hunting and trapping privileges would continue regardless of the outcome of boundary negotiations.

### B. OTHER REGIONAL COMMUNITIES

All communities approved the interim management agreement proposed between Parks Canada and Indian Affairs for administration and operation of Garden Creek on the condition the residents approved it. Meetings in Fort Vermilion and High Level expressed the view that the Garden Creek community should remain in Wood Buffalo National Park.

### C. SOUTHERN CANADA

Concurrence with the proposed 5-year study period prior to arriving at a final decision on the location and status of the Garden Creek community was noted by two special interest groups and at public meetings in Edmonton and Calgary. Southern participants do not believe Garden Creek residents should be forced to adapt to a lifestyle they do not like. However, the fact that Garden Creek is developing into a non-traditional, modern community with no legal status is recognized. The proposed interim management agreement between Parks Canada and Indian Affairs was thought to be a rational approach at this time. Continuation of hunting and trapping by community residents was approved.

### D. WRITTEN RESPONSES

Public participants who submitted written opinions took a stronger stand on this issue. Many of them stated that the community should, in fact, be relocated from the Park. The history of communities existing in national parks, and the problems associated with such communities were cited as reasons why Garden Creek should be relocated. Others suggested that Parks Canada should assist in this relocation.

### E. LOCAL LIAISON OFFICERS

Local Liaison Officers favoured the retention of Garden Creek within WBNP. However, the interim management agreement whereby Indian Affairs would support the community's development and Parks Canada would continue to control the land was agreed to as it permits the Band to explore other options for the community.

## ITEM #22: LAND CLAIMS

### A. LOCAL COMMUNITIES

The Fort Chipewyan and Peace Point communities reiterated their position that the Peace Point community remain part of the land claim settlement. Other local communities did not express an opinion on the proposals contained in the draft Management Plan.

### B. OTHER REGIONAL COMMUNITIES

These communities supported Parks Canada's position as noted in the draft Management Plan. Members of the Fort McMurray Operations Staff meeting noted that the introduction of commercial enterprise in the Peace Point area would create difficulties for park management. Apart from that concern, they supported Parks Canada's position. Fort Vermilion Board of Trade participants commented that communities affected by the land claims should become involved in tourism-oriented functions such as guiding and outfitting.

### C. SOUTHERN CANADA

Special interest groups expressed the opinion that the Peace Point entitlement is poorly located for both the native people and Wood Buffalo National Park. If agreeable to the residents of the community, this land claim should be transferred to the southeast corner of the park. It was noted that the Alberta Government must recognize its responsibility in settling the claim. The Canadian Nature Federation urged the introduction of public dialogue when and if specific areas in the Northwest Territories portion of the park are identified for land claim purposes.

### D. WRITTEN RESPONSES

Relocation of the Peace Point settlement to another area was urged in several cases as priority attention must be given to protecting park resources and the environment. There was no objection to a claim being honoured; location should be reconsidered. It was recognized that the park would be under no obligation to provide services to the Peace Point community.

### E. LOCAL LIAISON OFFICERS

The proposals stated in the draft Management Plan were accepted by the Local Liaison Officers. It was recognized that Parks Canada is prepared to respond to land claims whenever the Bands are ready. The Local Liaison Officers noted that because land claims issues contain wide ranging implications, separate meetings with Parks Canada will be required.

